



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS FORMER OFFICER AND CURRENT EMPLOYEE WITH THE CITY CORRECTION DEPARTMENT
ON CHARGES OF STEALING MORE THAN \$16,000 FROM INMATE COMMISSARY ACCOUNTS**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrests of a former officer and current employee with the City Department of Correction ("DOC") on charges of falsifying DOC records, including inmates' signatures, and taking more than \$16,000 from the accounts of hundreds of inmates who were being released from DOC custody. The office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the cases.

SONIA FIGUEROA, 47, and JENNIFER RODRIGUEZ, 23, both of the Bronx, were each arrested Thursday, July 16, 2009, and charged in separate criminal complaints with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony; Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony; and Petit Larceny, Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree and Official Misconduct, which are class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E felony by up to four years in prison, and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year's incarceration.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These City employees, who had good jobs with the Correction Department, abused them in a very deliberate and systematic way, embezzling money that belonged to others, according to the criminal complaints. It is particularly disturbing that one of the charged individuals was a well-paid 12-year veteran officer. Fortunately, the investigation exposed and put an end to the charged criminal conduct."

FIGUEROA began working at DOC in July 1997, was a Correction Officer who was assigned as a Cashier in DOC's Cashier's Office at the Vernon C. Bain Correctional Center, and received an annual salary of approximately \$70,700. She resigned in June 2009.

RODRIGUEZ began working at DOC in October 2005, was employed as the Cashier in the same office as FIGUEROA and received an annual salary of approximately \$38,814. Both FIGUEROA'S and RODRIGUEZ'S job responsibilities in the Cashier's Office included maintaining inmate deposit and withdrawal records and providing discharged inmates with any funds left in their commissary accounts.

After inmates are discharged from DOC they have up to 120 days to collect any funds remaining in their commissary accounts. If those funds are not collected within that timeframe, the funds are transferred to the New York City Police Department as unclaimed funds.

According to the criminal complaints:

- DOI reviewed RODRIGUEZ's computer entries indicating the commissary funds reportedly paid to discharged inmates and the Cashier Office's daily discharge sheets that corresponded with the computer entries. The investigation found that for approximately 500 computer entries RODRIGUEZ made between June 2007 and January 2008, totaling approximately \$12,000, the discharge sheets contained no corresponding entries. The investigation also found that RODRIGUEZ falsely reported in DOC records that the money had been paid to the inmates.
- DOI reviewed about 87 computer entries made between 2006 and 2008 indicating that FIGUEROA reportedly had distributed more than \$4,000 in commissary funds to discharged inmates. The investigation revealed that, contrary to those computer entries, the inmates who reportedly received the funds had been released into the custody of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and therefore could not have appeared in person to collect their funds. DOI's investigation found that FIGUEROA had falsified entries, including inmates' signatures, on DOC's discharge sheets and that FIGUEROA's signature appeared next to the false entries. The investigation reviewed FIGUEROA's cash box reconciliation records for the days corresponding to the computer entries and found that the cash box was missing the same amount of funds reflected in the computer entries.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked DOC Commissioner Martin F. Horn and Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, and their staffs, for their assistance on this investigation.

DOI's Office of Inspector General for the City Department of Correction conducted the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Brandler from the office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson has been assigned to prosecute the cases.

Criminal complaints are merely accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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